



Comdex Struts Its Handheld Stuff

Feature By Dave Johnson (with assistance by Benjamin E. Sones)

Palm's new Internet-focused strategy hinges, as CEO Carl Yankowski explained, on marrying the PIM features in every Palm with a personalized, customized view of the Web. The first step is a \$39.95 Mobile Internet Kit, which is available now. This package includes version 3.5 of the Palm OS as well as a connection cable to connect your Palm to a cellular phone (you can also connect via IR with compatible phones). Designed for the M100, Palm III, and Palm V models, Palm's CTO, it can give any existing model Palm VII-like Internet access capabilities.

The other half of their wireless strategy is a service called My Palm. It's a Web portal designed to bring a unified and customizable Internet experience to the Palm. On the surface, it looks like the front end used by wireless providers such as OmniSky—but My Palm also allows you to download apps, manage your bank accounts, check email, and synchronize contact and calendar data remotely. My Palm enters public beta in early December.

Though the Palm booth was abuzz with mobile news, much was happening elsewhere as well—particularly in the Handspring Partner Pavilion, where a record number of vendors were showing off Springboard modules—some old, many new. You can choose from among no less than three GPS receivers; HandyGPS has just begun shipping, while Magellan's GPS Companion should be available in March. The Geode GPS module—available this month and priced at about \$289—is the most elaborate with detailed attractions and services displayed

onscreen. Geode also includes a separate digital compass for heading and bearing information even when you're stationary or out of satellite coverage.

One of the hits of the show was Handspring's forthcoming Visor Phone, a module that delivers GSM telephone service with full Address Book integration, SMS messaging, and a three-hour talk time. Handspring still expects to ship this module by the end of the year.

The Sony Clie disappointed many Palm users when it made its debut earlier this year, but big things are afoot... namely, Memory Sticks. Originally

envisioned as just a storage technology, it wasn't until last year that Sony realized it was an ideal application platform as well. Sony demonstrated a trio of products: a tiny digital camera-on-a-stick, a fingerprint reader for biometric security, and a GPS receiver.

Perhaps the most jaw-dropping demo at Comdex, these Memory Sticks showed that the Clie has a bright future. The digital camera, for instance, captures 356 x 288-pixel color images with visibly better sharpness and detail than the EyeModule. The GPS Memory Stick is perhaps the smallest retail navigation device ever seen.

Sony also showed off many "high concept" devices—pre-prototype Memory Stick radios, microphones, speakers, TV tuners, and more. That doesn't include products from the reported 116 partners that are also developing Memory Stick devices. According to Sony, stay tuned in early 2001 for details on pricing and availability on the first batch of devices.

"Perhaps the most jaw-dropping demo at Comdex, these Memory Sticks showed that the Clie has a bright future..."

Review **Calligra 1.0** \$7.95, Holger Schufflitz, www.caon.de

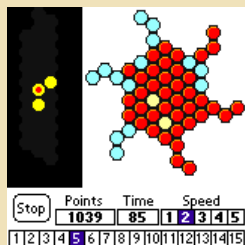
How many Tetris knock-offs have appeared since Alexey Pazhitnov first created the hyper-addictive game in 1985? Ten? Fifty? One hundred?

Holger Schufflitz's Calligra definitely has its roots in the popular puzzle game, but unlike most of the clones you may have seen, Calligra offers a truly fresh twist on the concept. Oddly shaped pieces drop down a well on the left side of the screen, but instead of rotating or shuffling them from side to side, you merely tap anywhere in the design that appears on the right side of the screen to indicate where each piece should go. It's tougher than it sounds, particularly because you can't

rotate the pieces.

Calligra is an addictively fun game, but it still has room for improvement. A "next piece" preview would be nice, and while the timed play mode (you race the clock trying to place as many pieces and earn as many points as you can before the timer runs out) is entertainingly frenetic, it would be nice to have a non-timed play mode (similar to Tetris) that would allow you to play as long as your skill allows.

For \$7.95, the game is definitely worth checking out, however. Especially if you are a Tetris fan. —Benjamin E. Sones



News

Watch Out, Arnold

Targus, makers of the Stowaway keyboard, announced that its Total Recall Springboard voice recorder is ready for retail. The module offers 4 MB (about 1.5 hours) of recording time, and sells for \$99. Although Targus insists that the module is available now at their online store (www.port.com), it has yet to appear there as of this writing. Perhaps any day now?...

Liberty 1.2 Released

Gambit Studios has updated their infamous GameBoy emulator for the Palm OS to include primitive sound support. "The Palm is not designed for this," Gambit's Michael Etherton explains, "and we were able to do what we did without adversely affecting speed. If people start complaining about it, we'll remove it." For more information, check out www.gambitstudios.com.

Visors For Sale: Cheap

Handspring is gearing up for what is likely to be fierce holiday competition by offering a \$30 instant rebate (wouldn't that be more accurately described as a "mark-down?") on any 2 MB Graphite Visor purchased between November 19 and December 31 at participating retailers (such as CompuUSA, BestBuy, Target, Amazon.com, Fry's, CDW, and Staples).

New Software

QuickOffice

How badly do you need Microsoft Office compatibility? For \$39.95 you can get Cutting Edge Software's QuickOffice, which gives you a Word-compatible text editor and an Excel-compatible spreadsheet program. www.cesinc.com

Florida Voting Tabulator 1.10

This freeware program is by TealPoint Software, but it doesn't appear to be available on their site. No problem—just grab it at www.palmgear.com. www.tealpoint.com

BugMe Messenger 1.01

Send your BugMe sticky-note messages anywhere in the world (assuming that your Palm device is connected to the Internet). It's \$19.95 if you already own BugMe, \$39.95 otherwise. bugme.net

